
 Working Together to Serve the Community

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Subject: Abbreviations

I.1

Policy Purpose

To provide those who document in the medical record with standardized medical abbreviations.

Policy Statement

This policy provides physicians and other caregivers who are authorized to document patient health and treatment information in the medical record a standardized listing of medical abbreviations.

Procedure

When physicians on the medical staff of Main Line Hospitals and other caregivers who are authorized to document patient health and treatment information in medical records use medical abbreviations they must reference abbreviations found in mediLexicon.com. (MLHS Intranet: [Education/References/medical Abbreviations Dictionary](#))

The following abbreviations **are prohibited** as supported by Regional Medication Safety Program for Hospitals, Institute for Safe Medication Practices, as well as by our organization's clinical intervention data, and therefore shall not be accepted on pre-printed forms, on any order sheet or any medication-related documents. Printed and electronic laboratory reports **are exempt** from the requirement that certain abbreviations not be used.

Problem Term	<u>Prohibited Abbreviation Term</u>	<u>Acceptable Term</u>
U for unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read as 0, 4, 6, or cc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write "unit"
IU for international unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misread as IV (intravenous) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use "units"
Zero after decimal point eg.1.0mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misread as 10-fold error Eg. 10mg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use terminal zeros for doses expressed in whole numbers
No zero before decimal dose Eg. .5mg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misread as 10-fold error Eg. 5mg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always use a zero before a decimal when the dose is less than a whole unit
Q.D. & Q.O.D.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistaken for each other. The period after the Q can be mistaken as "I" and the "O" as "I" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write "daily", and "every other day"
MS, MSO4, MgSO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confused for one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write "morphine sulfate" or "magnesium sulfate"
Trailing zeros are permitted in displaying laboratory values.		

The following abbreviations are not recommended for use , possible future inclusion in the JCAHO Official “Do Not Use” List		
Do Not Use	Potential Problem	Use Instead
> (greater than) < (less than)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misinterpreted as the number “7” (seven) or the letter “L” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “greater than” Write “less than”
Abbreviations for drug names	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misinterpreted due to similar abbreviations for multiple drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write drug names in full
Apothecary units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfamiliar to many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use metric units
@	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistaken for the number “2” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “at”
Cc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistaken for U (units) when poorly written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “ml” or “milliliters”
Ug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistaken for mg (milligrams) resulting in one thousand-fold overdose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “mcg” or “micrograms”

The following abbreviations are not recommended for use as evidenced in the literature:

Do Not Use	Potential Problem	Use Instead
O.D. for once daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreted as right eye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “once daily”
Q	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistaken for “O” or 0 (zero) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “every”
HS for half strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read as hour of sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use “half strength”
/(slash mark) for with, and, or per for medication orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read as a one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use, “and,” “with,” or “per”
T.I.W.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misread for 3 times a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “3 times weekly”
X3d for times three days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistaken for “three doses” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use “for three days”
O.J. for orange juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read as OD or OS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write “orange juice”

Abbreviations on the "not recommended" list will not be used for pre-printed orders for any revisions or new forms, effective 7/1/05.

Problematic orders will be brought to the attention of the prescriber and nurse for clarification prior to dispensing. Clinical interventions will be noted for any conversation held with a nurse or physician regarding drug orders. These are to be documented in the Patient Medication Profile under “clinical interventions.” (Reference Pharmacy Policy 3:05)

Replaces the following Policies/Procedures: Main Line Health Abbreviation List

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